

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-05 IO-11 SAM-01 SAB-01

ACDA-10 MC-02 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

OMB-01 EUR-12 /100 W

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P R 101322Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 546

INFO USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 1762

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S INTERVIEW WITH MAARIV COLUMNIST

1. MAARIV COLUMNIST INGE DEUTSCHKRON INTERVIEWED AMBASSADOR AND MRS. TOON MARCH 9 AS PART OF FEATURE SERIES ON AMBASSADORS IN ISRAEL. CONVERSATION DURING INTERVIEW VEERED AT TIMES TO THE POLITICAL SITUATION, AND DEUTSCHKRON WROTE A NEWS STORY FOR MAARIV - VIOLATING THE AGREED PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW.

2. FOLLOWING TEXT OF MAARIV ARTICLE IS ESSENTIALLY ACCURATE REFLECTION OF AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS EXCEPT THAT HIS RATIONALE FOR ARMS SUPPLY TO EGYPT, WHICH PARALLELED CLOSELY OFFICIAL STATEMENTS ALREADY MADE IN WASHINGTON, EMERGES WITH SOME SLIGHT DISTORTION:

3. "WE MUST SEE TO IT THAT PRESIDENT SADAT REMAINS IN POWER," AMBASSADOR MALCOLM TOON SAID YESTERDAY IN AN INTERVIEW WITH MAARIV. HE EXPLAINED THAT THIS IS THE MAJOR REASON FOR THE SUPPLY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO EGYPT. IN AMBASSADOR TOON'S VIEW, THIS POLICY IS ENTIRELY CONCORDANT WITH ISRAEL'S INTERESTS. 'YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT ANY ALTERNATIVE TO SADAT IS FAR MORE SOMBER. THE ONLY WAY TO GO ON MAINTAINING

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INFLUENCE IN EGYPT IS BY THE DELIVERY OF ARMS,' HE SAID.

THE AMBASSADOR IS NOT AT ALL HAPPY ABOUT THAT, 'BUT THERE IS NOTHING ELSE WE CAN DO.'

4. "AMBASSADOR TOON SAID THE UNITED STATES WILL 'MODERATELY' SUPPLY EGYPT WITH ARMS WHICH THE SOVIET UNION IS UNWILLING TO SELL HER. HE STRESSED: 'THIS PLAN IS IN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST, AND WE BELIEVE IT IS IN YOUR NATIONAL INTEREST AS WELL.'

5. "AMBASSADOR TOON FRANKLY ADMITTED EXISTENCE OF DISAGREEMENT WITH THE ISRAELI LEADERSHIP OVER 'OUR POLITICAL INTERESTS,' BUT THAT DOES NOT IMPLY THE U.S. WILL WEAKEN HER COMMITMENTS TO ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL. 'WE SIMPLY HAVE A DIFFERENT VIEW OF THE WAY THIS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT,' SAID THE AMBASSADOR.

6. "FROM THE AMBASSADOR'S WORDS ONE COULD ASSUME THAT THE US DOES NOT INTEND TO RETURN TO ISOLATIONISM. 'WE ARE JUST GOING TO BE MORE CAUTIOUS IN MATTERS PERTAINING TO FOREIGN AID AND OUR ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENT.'

7. "THIS FACT SHOULD BE ACCEPTED AT ITS FACE VALUE. SURELY IT IS NOT FOR ISRAEL 'TO TRY AND INFLUENCE OUR POLICY,' THE AMBASSADOR WARNED AND ADDED: 'FRANKLY, I SOMETIMES GET THE IMPRESSION THAT OUR EFFORTS TO SEE YOUR POINT OF VIEW ARE GREATER THAN YOUR WILLINGNESS TO UNDERSTAND OURS.'

8. "REFERRING TO THE CRITICAL STAND OF THE ISRAELI PRESS TO HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN THE PAST - QUITE SIMILAR TO THOSE HE MADE IN THIS INTERVIEW - AMBASSADOR TOON SAID 'THE FIRST REACTION OF THE PRESS TO MY PUBLIC STATEMENTS WAS MUCH TOO ROUGH, AS THOUGH I WAS EXPRESSING MY PERSONAL VIEWS.' HE EMPHASIZED THAT: 'WHAT I SAID ON THAT OCCASION HAD RECEIVED WASHINGTON'S FULL APPROVAL. IN FACT, IT WAS WASHINGTON, AND NOT AMBASSADOR TOON, THAT HAD BEEN SPEAKING TO YOU.' AMBASSADOR TOON BELIEVES THAT THE ISRAELI PRESS SHOULD DEMONSTRATE MORE RESPONSIBILITY, SINCE, DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE PRESS HAD REACTED IN A BIASED MANNER ON THAT OCCASION, THE PUBLIC FAILED TO GRASP U.S. NEW STAND, AND IT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR THE ISRAEL PUBLIC TO UNDERSTAND U.S. POSITION, ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT AFFECT ITS COMMITMENTS TO UNCLASSIFIED

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ISRAEL.

9. " 'WE DON'T SEE EYE TO EYE (WITH ISRAEL) ON EVERY SUBJECT...WE MUST BE MATURE ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS OUR DISAGREEMENTS, AND BY REACHING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING WE MAY FORM A BASIS FOR COOPERATION,' SAID AMBASSADOR TOON." END TEXT.

10. PRESS ATTACHE VOGEL WAS PRESENT AND TOOK NOTES DURING

INTERVIEW. MUCH OF CONVERSATION DEALT WITH TOONS' HOME LIFE, BUT PORTIONS RELEVANT TO THE DEUTSCHKRON NEWS ITEM ARE CARRIED BELOW FROM HIS NOTES:

11. DEUTSCHKRON: "CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THE ISRAELIS?"

12. AMBASSADOR: "PROBABLY NOT; PROBABLY NO ONE CAN UNLESS HE HAS EXPERIENCED YOUR HISTORY." THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE FELT HE DID HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF PEOPLE HERE, BUT THAT WITHOUT LIVING THROUGH THEIR TURBULENT HISTORY NO ONE COULD HAVE A TRUE APPRECIATION. HE SAID THAT HE COULD UNDERSTAND THEIR PACE, THEIR INTENSITY, THEIR INTEREST IN POLITICS BECAUSE OF THE SITUATION IN WHICH THEY LIVED.

13. THE AMBASSADOR SAID: 'IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU TRY TO UNDERSTAND US. AND FRANKLY I FEEL THAT WE SOMETIMES MAKE MORE OF AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND YOU THAN YOU DO TO UNDERSTAND US.'...

14. DEUTSCHKRON ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WORLD PEACE AND THE MIDDLE EAST.

15. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT HE FELT PEACE WAS A LONG WAY OFF IN THIS AREA, BUT THAT CONTINUED EFFORTS TOWARD PEACE MUST BE MADE. HE TOLD OF HIS DESIRE TO HELP IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE. "SOMETIMES," HE SAID, "I SOUND TOUGH IN MY SPEAKING, BUT I DON'T THINK WE MAKE MUCH PROGRESS BY JUST SPEAKING IN GENERALITIES."

16. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE FELT AMERICANS AND ISRAELIS SHOULD BE ABLE TO SIT AND TALK TOGETHER FRANKLY WITHOUT AROUSING TEMPERS. HE TALKED OF PRESS MISUNDERSTANDING WHEN HE FIRST CAME TO ISRAEL. "I WAS TALKING BECAUSE I FELT IT
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WAS TIME FOR SOMEONE FROM WASHINGTON TO SPEAK FRANKLY...BUT I WAS OPERATING WITHIN A RECOGNIZED FRAMEWORK. ALL AMBASSADORS DO THIS."

17. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED IF DEUTSCHKRON AND THE MAARIV PHOTOGRAPHER FELT THAT PEOPLE NOW UNDERSTAND HIM BETTER SINCE HE HAD BEEN HERE LONGER. THE PHOTOGRAPHER SAID THAT HE FELT THE PRESS DID SO, BUT THAT HE DOUBTED THAT PEOPLE IN GENERAL COULD YET ACCEPT SUCH PLAIN SPEAKING.

18. THE PHOTOGRAPHER ASKED IF THE AMBASSADOR FELT THERE WAS A CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, MIGHT THERE BE A POSSIBILITY THAT THE AMERICANS WOULD ONE DAY DROP THE ISRAELIS, JUST "AS THE FRENCH DID SUDDENLY IN 1967."

19. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE DID NOT FEEL SUCH A COMPLETE AND SUDDEN CHANGE WAS POSSIBLE IN AMERICA. HE DID SAY THAT HE FELT THERE WAS A CHANGE IN AMERICAN ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN AID IN GENERAL, AND THAT AT SOME POINT SOME OF THIS ATTITUDE CHANGE MIGHT AFFECT ISRAEL. "WE ARE GOING TO BE MUCH MORE CAREFUL ABOUT OUR INVOLVEMENT IN FOREIGN AID... THIS IS NOT DIRECTED TOWARD ISRAEL IN PARTICULAR." THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE HAD SPOKEN OUT BECAUSE HE FELT ISRAELIS SHOULD RECOGNIZE THESE BASIC FEELINGS IN THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, BUT THAT HE COULD NOT SEE THESE FEELINGS UPSETTING BASIC ISRAELI-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIPS. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE DID FEEL THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD NO RIGHT TO ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE IN DOMESTIC POLITICS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES...

20. DEUTSCHKRON AND THE PHOTOGRAPHER ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PROPOSED ARMS AID TO EGYPT.

21. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT OF SADAT AS A MODERATE, AND THAT THE ISRAELIS SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT AS A MODERATE SADAT COULD BE A MODERATING INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE SAID THAT ISRAELIS SHOULD REALIZE THAT SADAT WOULD NEED HELP FROM THE UNITED STATES AND UNDERSTANDING FROM ISRAEL. "ONE WAY OF SEEING THAT SADAT REMAINS IN POWER IS TO GIVE SADAT SOME WEAPONS WHICH HE NEEDS SINCE HE BROKE WITH THE SOVIETS." THE AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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IT WAS NATURAL THAT THE GYPTIAN MILITARY WOULD BECOME RESTLESS WITH THE CUTOFF OF THEIR SUPPLIES FROM THE RUSSIANS, AND THEY WOULD DEMAND TO SEE SOME RESULTS FROM THE NEW CLOSENESS WITH THE AMERICANS. "WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS IS GOING TO BE A MODEST PROGRAM," THE AMBASSADOR SAID, AND ISRAELIS SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THIS PROGRAM IS IN THE INTEREST OF ISRAELIS. THE AMBASSADOR ADDED: "ANY ACTION TAKEN BY THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH THE DEMANDS OF ISRAELI SECURITY."
TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, TEXT, AMBASSADORS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TELAV01762
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760090-0958
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760374/aaaacmyu.tel
Line Count: 211
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 AUG 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 AUG 2004 by meiwc>; APPROVED <09 DEC 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S INTERVIEW WITH MAARIV COLUMNIST
TAGS: PFOR, IS, US, (TOON, MALCOLM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006